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Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 8 October 2001, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia)

Contents

Agenda item 18: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (Territories not covered under other agenda items)*

Agenda item 91: Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations*

Agenda item 92: Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories*

Agenda item 93: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations*

Agenda item 12: Report of the Economic and Social Council*

Agenda item 94: Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories*

Requests for hearings

Organization of work

* Items which the Committee has decided to consider together.

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 18: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (Territories not covered under other agenda items) (A/56/1 and Corr.1, A/56/23 (Part II, chap. VI and IX-XI), A/56/23 (Part III, chap. XIII D-F and H) and A/56/159; S/2001/148, S/2001/398 and S/2001/613)

Agenda item 91: Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 e of the Charter of the United Nations (A/56/23 (Part II, chap. VIII), A/56/23 (Part III, chap. XIII A) and A/56/67)

Agenda item 92: Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories (A/56/23 (Part II, chap. V), A/56/23 (Part III, chap. XIII B))

Agenda item 93: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations (A/56/23 (Part II, chap. VII), A/56/23 (Part III, chap. XIII C) and A/56/65; A/C.4/56/CRP.1)

Agenda item 12: Report of the Economic and Social Council (A/56/3, chap. VII E)

Agenda item 94: Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories (A/56/88)

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

2. **The Chairman** said that decolonization had been a defining issue of the latter part of the twentieth century. The adoption, in 1960, of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV)) and the establishment, in 1961, of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples undoubtedly had helped many of the 189 States that were currently Members of the United Nations to gain their independence.

3. **Mr. Mekdad** (Syrian Arab Republic), rapporteur of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, introduced the report of the Committee on its work during 2001 (A/56/23). The Special Committee's recommendations were contained in Part III of the report.

4. The proclamation of a Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism had provided a new impetus to United Nations work on decolonization. Implementation of the Plan of Action for the Second Decade was a major objective of the Special Committee. The Plan contained recommendations for specific measures to be taken in implementation of General Assembly resolutions.

5. During the period under review, the Special Committee had encouraged further dialogue with the administering Powers, representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and experts. Those discussions had been particularly productive in the case of New Zealand and Tokelau but had not produced the hoped-for results with regard to the administering Powers of American Samoa and Pitcairn. In the absence of visiting missions, which would have been extremely useful, the Special Committee had conducted regional seminars alternately in the Caribbean and the Pacific, which had provided a forum for the representatives of the people and civil society in the Non-Self-Governing Territories and had allowed the Special Committee to explain its activities to the participants. The Caribbean regional seminar, held in May 2001 in Havana, had been highly successful and open, as could be seen from the report of the Special Committee to the General Assembly.

6. The Special Committee had also considered information from the Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 of the Charter and had reiterated the importance of timely transmission by the administering Powers to the Secretariat. It had also urged the administering Powers to guarantee the inalienable right of the people of the Territories to their natural resources.

7. The Special Committee had considered the work of the specialized agencies and other international organizations in implementation of the Declaration and had held consultations with the Economic and Social Council regarding the need for increased assistance to

the Non-Self Governing Territories, particularly the small island territories, in the light of the downturn in the world economy. On the basis of information provided by the Secretariat, experts and NGOs, it had submitted recommendations to the General Assembly.

8. The Special Committee had invited all parties to assist New Caledonia in its peaceful progress towards self-determination. It had noted with satisfaction that Tokelau and New Zealand were cooperating in the return of authority to the traditional leadership in the context of the Modern House project, which was viewed as a means to the achievement of self-determination. It had also reviewed the situation in American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Guam, Montserrat, Pitcairn, Saint Helena, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands and had made recommendations to the General Assembly concerning the constitutional, social and economic development of those Territories.

9. The Special Committee was aware of the importance of information, and had recommended that the Department of Public Information and the Department of Political Affairs should continue to publicize the work of the United Nations on decolonization. On the issue of military activities and arrangements by the administering Powers in the Territories under their administration, it had reiterated that the administering Powers should take all necessary measures not to involve those Territories in offensive acts or interference against other States.

10. The Special Committee had adopted a resolution asking Argentina and the United Kingdom to consolidate the process of dialogue and cooperation in order to find a peaceful solution to the sovereignty dispute regarding the Falkland Islands (Malvinas). It had decided to transmit the documentation on Gibraltar and Western Sahara to the Assembly and had adopted a resolution reaffirming the right of the Puerto Rican people to self-determination and independence.

11. He urged the members of the Fourth Committee to adopt the draft resolutions contained in the Special Committee's report.

12. **Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoué** (Côte d'Ivoire), Acting Chairman of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, described the guidelines followed by the

Special Committee during the period under review and said that despite the progress achieved since 1960, decolonization had not yet been completed. After considering the information provided by the administering Powers under Article 73 *e* of the Charter and consulting with the various stakeholders, the Committee had adopted one decision and nine resolutions by consensus. It had also adopted unanimously a resolution on Puerto Rico. With regard to international assistance to the Territories, the Special Committee had stressed the importance of cooperation with the Economic and Social Council, which had subsequently adopted a resolution on implementation of the Declaration by the specialized agencies.

13. The Special Committee recognized the important contribution of the representatives and peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories and would take full account of their views in planning its programme of work. The regional seminar for the Caribbean, which had been held in Cuba, had provided a forum for the Special Committee to hear the views of the representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, many of whom had come to report on their activities and to announce their intention to invite the administering Powers to elaborate plans for decolonization. The Special Committee had endorsed the substance of the seminar's recommendations and conclusions.

14. The Special Committee attached great importance to the participation of the administering Powers in its work and welcomed the attendance at its meetings of France, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States, even though the two last named States had attended in an unofficial capacity. Cooperation with New Zealand had been very constructive. The representatives of Tokelau and the New Zealand Government had expressed their respective concerns at the meetings held in June 2001 with the Special Committee. Following those meetings, the *Ulu-o-Tokelau*, the highest authority on Tokelau, had declared that it had a better understanding of the Special Committee's *raison d'être*. Now that it was better informed about the situation of Tokelauans, the Special Committee was of the view that programmes of work on a case-by-case basis could succeed with the cooperation and goodwill of all the parties concerned. It was therefore desirable to have the participation, preferably formal, of the administering Powers in the work of the Special Committee. In that regard, the

Committee regretted that the United Kingdom and the United States of America had still not clarified the modalities of their cooperation on the question of Pitcairn and American Samoa.

15. The Special Committee welcomed the peaceful conduct of the elections in East Timor, which was a step towards that Territory's accession to independence. It also paid tribute to the public spiritedness and determination of the Timorese people and expressed its gratitude to the United Nations and the international community for their support. Much more remained to be done and, as the Acting Chairman of the Special Committee, he called on members of the Fourth Committee to support the recommendations that had been submitted to the General Assembly.

General debate

16. **Mr. Valdés** (Chile), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Rio Group, reiterated the Group's support for the process of decolonization in strict compliance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, of resolution 1514 (XV), and of other relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, and welcomed the fact that the number of Non-Self-Governing Territories had declined from 62 to 17 since the adoption of the Declaration. However, the fact that 17 Territories were still on the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories proved that the process of decolonization was far from complete, as the proclamation of a Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism showed. The plan of action for the Second Decade was based on the principle that the international community and the United Nations should assist the Non-Self-Governing Territories in their evolution towards self-government. The objective was to put an end to colonial situations, on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the particularities of each Territory and favouring the most judicious solution, which, in certain cases, meant respecting the principle of territorial integrity.

17. The Rio Group stressed the importance which it attached to the full and unrestricted cooperation of the administering Powers, which should provide the information requested under Article 73 *e* of the Charter and assist the Special Committee in establishing a programme of work for each Territory. In that connection, he congratulated the Government of New Zealand for its exemplary work and expressed

appreciation to France for the progress that had been made towards the decolonization of New Caledonia.

18. The Rio Group wished to reiterate its support for the Special Committee, which should remain the principal organ of the United Nations for carrying forward the process of decolonization, and welcomed the activities that had been undertaken the previous year, including the organization of the regional seminar in Cuba. The Group stressed the importance of holding such seminars and hoped that the Fourth Committee and the General Assembly would adopt the recommendations and conclusions put forward by the Special Committee and the participants in the regional seminar in their respective reports.

19. The Rio Group stressed once more the need for Argentina and the United Kingdom to resume talks aimed at finding a peaceful, just and lasting solution to the dispute over sovereignty of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) and South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands. The Rio Group welcomed the conditions under which the elections for the first constituent assembly had been held in East Timor and called upon all the parties involved to draft a constitution that reflected the will of the Timorese people and to cooperate in the final stage of the transition to independence. It paid tribute to all the personnel of the United Nations Transition Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) and wished to express its support for an international presence in East Timor during the post-independence period. With regard to Western Sahara, the Rio Group firmly hoped that the settlement plan would be implemented in accordance with the terms that had been agreed upon on 30 August 1988 by Morocco and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Harha y de Río de Oro, the 1997 Houston agreements and the 1999 protocols, and in accordance with the Charter and with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. The Rio Group hoped that the parties would continue their negotiations, under the auspices of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General, so that the people of Western Sahara could exercise their inalienable right to self-determination. Measures should be taken to facilitate sustainable and balanced development in the small island Territories of the Caribbean and Pacific, which comprised the majority of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. The international community must also assist those Territories in combating their

environmental problems, natural disasters, drug trafficking and money-laundering.

20. **Mr. Nacerodien** (South Africa) expressed appreciation to the Special Committee for its report on its work in 2001. He emphasized that, if international peace and security were to prevail, the United Nations and the Security Council in particular must take into consideration such problems as poverty, disease and oppression. Similarly, there could be no sustainable development without respect for freedom, democracy and human rights.

21. The Special Committee had an important role to play in ending colonial domination. While South Africa had been able to overcome the era of apartheid, it was aware that many peoples were still deprived of freedom, dignity and the right to self-determination. It therefore hoped that the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism would allow the United Nations and its Member States to relegate colonialism to the scrap heap of history, thus opening the way for an era of partnership and collective action in greater harmony with the aspirations of peoples, United Nations resolutions and the principles enshrined in the Charter.

22. His delegation was seriously concerned about the situation in the Middle East, and considered that Member States were obliged under the terms of the Charter and General Assembly and Security Council resolutions to end the violence and the foreign occupation, and to recognize the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

23. Concerning the situation in Western Sahara, the South African Government was concerned about the delay in the implementation of the agreements concluded between the parties concerned. While it considered that significant progress had been made in the framework of the settlement plan, in particular concerning the identification of eligible voters, and while reaffirming that an imposed solution would not lead to a lasting peace, his Government invited the United Nations to hold the referendum which the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) had prepared so that all Saharans could exercise their right to self-determination.

24. **Mr. Requeijo** (Cuba) said that decolonization had been one of the Organization's major historical achievements and stressed that, since the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to

Colonial Countries and Peoples, over 60 new independent States had been created. Nonetheless, he noted with grave concern that the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories had remained practically unchanged in recent years. Cuba could not express its satisfaction when there was a negative and dangerous trend emerging, whereby delays, disinterest and a lack of a sense of history made it impossible to find a definitive and lasting solution to the colonial problem. Criteria such as land area and number of inhabitants had been unscrupulously and unacceptably manipulated in order to deny peoples their inalienable rights of self-determination and independence. It was just as unacceptable that certain Powers were trying to replace the right to independence with the right to self-determination, while the two rights could not and must not be assessed separately from one another.

25. Referring to the efforts made by the Special Committee to improve its methods of work, he said that such efforts could not succeed without the cooperation of the administering Powers, and noted with deep regret that some of them still refused to maintain serious and ongoing relations with the Special Committee and continued to hinder its work and block its initiatives.

26. Observation visits to Non-Self-Governing Territories were no more than a distant memory, and some people were calling for them to be replaced by propaganda campaigns directed against the very purpose of the Special Committee, in a veritable act of manipulation aimed at spreading confusion and fostering prejudice.

27. Certain administering Powers continued to carry out military manoeuvres and live ammunition firing exercises in the Territories under their domination, despite the growing opposition of the local population and world public opinion. Such practices, which flouted the most basic rights and interests of the affected populations, must cease immediately. Similarly, the frantic exploitation and pillaging of the natural resources of Non-Self-Governing Territories, which Cuba had already condemned on various occasions, was a flagrant violation of the letter and the spirit of General Assembly resolution 2621 (XXV).

28. To overcome these problems, Cuba believed that it would be very useful to continue the regional decolonization seminars, as they made it possible to call attention to Territories still under the colonial yoke

that were too often deliberately forgotten by the mainstream media. Information on such Territories was not well disseminated, despite the creation of a web page on decolonization which was indeed consulted by a growing number of people interested in the subject.

29. With regard to Puerto Rico, Cuba welcomed the adoption of a series of resolutions recognizing the inalienable right of that State to self-determination and independence, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960. It reiterated once again its firm support for the independence and self-determination of the brotherly people of Puerto Rico.

30. Cuba was satisfied with the progress made in the decolonization process in New Caledonia and the Tokelau Islands, and noted with satisfaction that East Timor would be admitted as the 190th State Member of the United Nations during the fifty-sixth session. That proved that the work of the Committee, as difficult as it might be, had a purpose and produced results.

31. However, Cuba noted with great concern the paralysis in the process of settling the issue of Western Sahara and the fact that the conditions set by the interested parties had begun to be dangerously modified and manipulated, representing a risk not only for the future of the process but also for regional and international security and stability. Cuba reaffirmed that the holding of a just, transparent and impartial referendum and strict respect for the settlement plan and the Houston accords, as well as for General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on the subject constituted the only way of arriving at an honourable solution to a conflict that had lasted too long.

32. With respect to the question of the Malvinas Islands, Cuba once more expressed its full support for the legitimate right of the Argentine Republic in the sovereignty conflict over the islands, and considered that the dialogue and cooperation established between the parties could lead to a just, peaceful and honourable solution.

33. As to the need to respect the rights and interests of the people of Guam, Cuba urged the administering Power to show full cooperation and to respect the relevant resolutions adopted by the Special Committee and the General Assembly.

34. Once again, Cuba reaffirmed the importance of the role the General Assembly of the United Nations must play in the long and patient struggle for the defence of the inalienable rights of all peoples of the world. It was in that democratic and open forum that all could speak and be heard without the ever-present shadow of anachronistic rights of veto, which made it impossible to get to the root of problems and were exercised to the detriment of the interests of the most disadvantaged and those most weighed down by the colonial yoke and wrongful occupation.

35. **Mr. Zaemsky** (Russian Federation) said that his country, one of the founders of the Special Committee on Decolonization, had always taken an active part in the consideration of decolonization issues. The current session of the General Assembly was taking place at the beginning of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, and the Russian Federation considered it to be an opportune moment to set out its position on the question.

36. One of the priority tasks was to seek to increase the effectiveness of the Special Committee's work. To achieve that, a three-fold approach should be adopted: firstly, the orientation of work towards concrete results, including through the elaboration of individual programmes for the Non-Self-Governing Territories, for example through practical measures aimed at promoting self-governance; secondly, strengthening the non-confrontational and pragmatic approaches taken by the United Nations in the area of decolonization; and thirdly, promoting a dialogue between the Special Committee and the administering Powers.

37. The Russian Federation emphasized that the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories would not be able to exercise their right to self-determination and independence effectively unless full account were taken of the objective realities of their political, social and economic development and of the whole variety of forms and modalities of self-determination based on freedom of choice and respect for human rights.

38. Regarding the issue of East Timor, the Russian Federation commended the activities of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) and the progress achieved towards declaration of the territory's independence. The Russian Federation considered that the United Nations had played a key role in overcoming the crisis in the territory, and that provision must be made for the

further evolution of that role in the context of the international community's presence in the new State. The scale, configuration and time limits of the international presence should be determined on the basis of East Timor's real needs and of the development of the situation in the island. It should be the United Nations which had the role of coordinating the broad range of foreign actors involved in the formation of the new State. The entire process, including the transition from UNTAET to a new form of United Nations presence, should be smooth and well calculated so that the achievements of the United Nations in East Timor were not compromised.

39. With respect to the prospects of a settlement in Western Sahara, the current situation did not give grounds for optimism, and the settlement plan signed by the parties was still not implemented, in spite of the hopes raised recently by the package of measures presented by the Secretary-General. The Russian Federation reaffirmed its position on the issue and stated that it would welcome any settlement of the dispute in Western Sahara provided that it was acceptable to all parties to the conflict. That was not a pious hope, but a recognition of the fact that for any settlement to be effective and lasting any proposed formula should deliberately avoid implying winners and losers, and should be based on concessions by both parties. The Russian Federation also emphasized that the United Nations settlement plan represented a good basis for a political settlement of the conflict. The political will to overcome obstacles remained a decisive factor in solving decolonization issues.

40. **Mr. Sinha** (India) said that colonialism was contrary to the fundamental tenets of democracy, freedom, dignity, progress and human rights, and that one of the great achievements of the United Nations had been to rid the world, or most of it, of that scourge. The mandate established in the Declaration had been largely, although not completely, fulfilled, in that 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories remained on the list. The complexities that existed with respect to those Territories were well-known, and the task was therefore all the more delicate. The last steps were the most difficult, but the responsibility they represented could not be shirked.

41. It was essential to persevere in a spirit of cooperation, understanding, political realism and flexibility in order to attain the goal. All States, the administering Powers and others alike, had a shared

responsibility in that regard. It was of fundamental importance that the peoples of those Territories should be able freely to choose the kind of political system they desired for their own governance. The role of the United Nations was to ascertain the wishes of those peoples and to facilitate the creation of the political, economic and social structure of their choice.

42. The administering Powers had a special responsibility in that regard and, as cooperation — not confrontation — was the key to its work, the Special Committee on decolonization had sought to engage them in a constructive and meaningful discussion on the fate of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. In that regard his delegation welcomed the participation of the United Kingdom in the Caribbean Regional Seminar which had been held in Havana in May. Such interactions should be encouraged. Not only should account be taken of the initial discussions held on American Samoa and Pitcairn, but the engagement should be expanded to include the other remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories.

43. The majority of Member States had only recently emerged from colonial rule. They had all fought for their freedom one way or another and they knew that the freedom they had won — sometimes at great cost — could not be taken for granted. That realization was the underlying motive for the inclusion of the sixth paragraph of the Declaration. He strongly denounced the actions of terrorists who sought to overthrow representative governments and to destroy the fundamental rights that the Declaration sought to protect yet who described themselves as freedom fighters, besmirching the memory of those who truly had fought for freedom. Terrorists were not freedom fighters.

44. At the dawn of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, India, as a founding Member of the United Nations and of the Special Committee, reaffirmed its commitment to the noble ideals enshrined in the Declaration.

45. **Mr. Mackay** (New Zealand) said that the continuing role of the United Nations in the process of decolonization remained important to many delegations. New Zealand continued to have responsibility for Tokelau, which remained on the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories. Tokelau faced an extraordinary challenge because of its situation — it consisted of three atolls, each separated from the other

by large stretches of the South Pacific, none of which was more than 200 metres wide nor higher than five metres above sea level. It had a total population of 1,500. There had never been a resident administering Power presence on the Territory.

46. As the Administrator of Tokelau had said before the Special Committee, on 28 June 2001, Tokelau and New Zealand saw self-determination as a dynamic and evolving process. Tokelau's need was to devise for itself a form of self-government that fitted its cultural context through a process of local empowerment. What one saw in Tokelau was a largely self-generated approach to decolonization, where the administering Power and third parties recognized what the people of Tokelau constructed.

47. The *Ulu-o-Tokelau* (paramount chief of Tokelau) had told the Special Committee in June that the people of Tokelau did not see self-determination as a sudden vote on the existing three options; they were not looking at the issue with only the free association option in mind but were also looking at the full integration option in order to make an informed choice.

48. A major step towards self-government in Tokelau had been the withdrawal of the New Zealand State Services Commissioner from his role as employer of the Tokelau public service as from 30 June. With regard to the development of Tokelau's international personality, he pointed out that Tokelau's admission to UNESCO as an associate member was set for 15 October, the first day of the UNESCO General Conference.

49. The issue in Tokelau was not about eliminating colonialism but about resolving issues of governance for the very smallest of States. New Zealand remained committed to working with the Special Committee and abiding by the freely expressed wishes of the people of Tokelau on their future status. It continued to respect Tokelau's wish to move at its own pace on the process of self-determination.

50. **Ms. Howe-Johnson** (United Kingdom) welcomed the opportunity to again present the United Kingdom's position as administering Power. Reviewing the progress made since the Committee's last meeting, she said that the Overseas Territories Consultative Committee had held its third meeting, in September, under the chairmanship of the new Minister for the Overseas Territories. That Committee provided a forum for structured political dialogue between the elected

representatives of the Overseas Territories and Her Majesty's Government on such matters as the process of constitutional review and human rights issues arising from the United Kingdom's international commitments.

51. The United Kingdom's partnership with its overseas Territories continued to evolve. On 21 June, the Government had introduced the British Overseas Territories bill, which would grant British citizenship, with right to abode in the United Kingdom, to citizens from 13 of the 14 British Dependent Territories. It would also formally change the nomenclature from dependent to overseas Territory to reflect more accurately the nature of the relationship. On 26 September, the United Kingdom and most of its Overseas Territories had adopted an Environment Charter which set out 10 guiding principles expressing the key environmental commitments that the international community had adopted. They were followed by specific commitments indicating how the United Kingdom and Overseas Territories' Governments would work for the benefit of the environment. That was a good example of how progress could be made by working together in an area of mutual interest, which was critical to the future prosperity, well-being and even survival of many of the Overseas Territories and their communities.

52. For the United Kingdom, the wishes of the populations concerned, exercised in accordance with the other principles set out in the United Nations Charter and in other international treaties, were of paramount importance. The United Kingdom relationship continued to be based on the fundamental principles of self-determination, mutual obligations, freedom for the Territories to run their affairs to the greatest degree possible and a firm commitment from the United Kingdom to help the Territories economically and to assist them in emergencies. The Special Political and Decolonization Committee surely recognized that the United Kingdom Government's approach was basically the same as its own. That commonality was, however, unfortunately not always reflected in all relevant resolutions, in particular of the Special Committee. Her delegation, while welcoming the fact that the omnibus resolution stated that in the decolonization process there was "no alternative to the principle of self-determination", regretted that the Special Committee continued to apply selectively that principle, which was enshrined in the United Nations

Charter and in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

53. The United Kingdom would continue to work to improve its cooperation with the Special Committee. It had sent a representative to the Regional Seminar held in Havana in 2001. It welcomed the efforts made by the Special Committee to pursue the informal dialogue with the administering Powers with a view to possible removal of the Territories from the list.

54. **Mr. Rani Ismail Hadi** (Malaysia), speaking on behalf of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that the Association's support for the decolonization process was reflected in its support for the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

55. Since the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, sweeping changes had transformed the world from one in which most of the population had lived under the yoke of colonialism into one in which the majority of humankind exercised their right to self-determination. The Association was convinced that the objectives set in that landmark document were the road map for the attainment of peace, justice and sustainable development. In that regard, ASEAN called on all the administering Powers to take all necessary steps to ensure the effective and speedy implementation of the Declaration and other relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

56. Despite the concrete progress achieved, some Non-Self-Governing Territories were still not able to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination. The international community had a collective responsibility to the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories and should evolve mechanisms to meet those Territories' special characteristics and problems. In the matter of self-determination, all available options were valid, provided that they were exercised in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV) and with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

57. It was the duty of the international community to work and dialogue with the Non-Self-Governing Territories and with the concerned administering Powers, so as to enable the peoples to realize their aspirations and to adopt the political, economic and social systems of their choice. In that regard, ASEAN acknowledged with appreciation the dialogue initiated

between the Non-Self-Governing Territories and the respective administering Powers, which had made encouraging progress.

58. Similarly, the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations could play a significant role in expediting economic and social progress in the Territories. In that connection, ASEAN supported the promotion of close cooperation between the Special Committee and the Economic and Social Council in order to enhance United Nations assistance to the Territories and thus enhance awareness among the peoples of those Territories of the options and benefits offered by the United Nations system. More than ever, the United Nations could play a crucial role in eliminating the last remnants of colonialism.

59. **Mr. Mejdoub** (Tunisia) emphasized that, despite significant progress, the task of decolonization remained unfinished and continued to require the commitment and cooperation of the international community. In particular, the Special Committee played an important role in that regard and the continuation of its efforts, aimed in particular at formulating a programme of work for the Non-Self-Governing Territories on a case-by-case basis, required the cooperation of the administering Powers.

60. Tunisia hoped that the dialogue between those Powers and the Special Committee, which in recent years had made encouraging progress, would be further strengthened. In that connection, the administering Powers must transmit to the Secretary-General information on their respective Territories and the representatives of those Territories must participate in the Special Committee's work in order to make known the population's aspirations and to make the population aware of its rights and its options with regard to self-determination.

61. In that context, seminars and visiting missions played a decisive role. The assistance of the Special Committee, of the United Nations system and of the regional organizations was crucial for the social and economic development of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, in particular the small island Territories.

62. By proclaiming the period 2001-2010 as the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, the General Assembly had reaffirmed that decolonization continued to be at the forefront of the concerns of the United Nations and constituted a

collective task requiring active support from Member States and the United Nations system.

63. **Mr. Yahya** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) expressed his country's strong approval of the efforts made by the Special Committee, supported by the international community, to realize the dream of all the peoples of the world, the right to freedom, independence and self-determination.

64. The Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (resolution 1514 (XV)), as well as subsequent resolutions, had affirmed the right of peoples to self-determination and independence. It was high time that the administering Powers implemented those resolutions and took whatever measures necessary in response to the wishes of the international community and the peoples concerned. It was shameful that peoples continued to labour under the yoke of occupation while the very countries which oppressed them called for liberty, democracy and respect for human rights.

65. The international community must resolutely oppose the practices of certain countries in the Territories which they administered, for example the use of those Territories for military operations against a third country. Such activities affected the health of the population and their economic and social environment and violated paragraph 12 of General Assembly resolution 55/147 which required the administering Powers in question to eliminate the remaining military bases in the Non-Self-Governing Territories which they administered.

66. Some countries were oppressing the populations of the regions under their control (imprisonment, ill-treatment). They were also making radical geographic and demographic changes and forcing the indigenous people to flee, creating unprecedented population flows. The international community must therefore take whatever measures necessary to put an end to such practices and ensure implementation of the relevant international resolutions.

67. The administering Powers should cooperate actively with the Special Committee with a view to permitting the inhabitants of the Territories to express their views within the framework of the Committee's work or outside the Committee, in accordance with the Plan of Action for the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (A/56/61, Annex). The United Nations must allow the inhabitants of the

Territories to participate in those efforts and provide them with the necessary financial resources so that they could exercise their legitimate rights to freedom and independence.

68. Economic and cultural support must continue to be provided to the Territories in question, either on a unilateral basis or through United Nations specialized agencies. Particular attention must also be paid to the small Territories: there should be periodic visiting missions to those Territories and more suitable proposals should be submitted to the General Assembly to enable their populations to exercise their right to self-determination, including independence, in accordance with the resolution of the Special Committee contained in document A/AC.109/2001/26.

69. **Mr. Paolillo** (Uruguay), speaking on behalf of the MERCOSUR countries and associated States, stressed that the continued existence of colonial situations was incompatible with the founding principles of the United Nations. Peace and security at the international, regional and interregional levels could not be guaranteed until such situations were remedied.

70. The MERCOSUR countries and associated States had strongly supported the proclamation of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism because, despite the considerable progress made, the decolonization process was still incomplete, as clearly evidenced by the existence of Non-Self-Governing Territories. He welcomed the efforts undertaken by the Special Committee, in particular the regional seminar organized in Cuba. Recalling the dispute between Argentina and the United Kingdom regarding sovereignty over the Malvinas, he expressed full support for the statement made by the representative of Chile on behalf of the Rio Group and reiterated the declaration on the Malvinas signed by the Presidents of the Member States of MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile, in which they had indicated their support for Argentina in that regard, and expressed the hemisphere's hope that the problem would be resolved rapidly and fairly in accordance with the resolutions of the United Nations and the Organization of American States. He also expressed surprise that the United Kingdom, which had sought peaceful and negotiated solutions in other cases in the past, had not adopted the same position with regard to the Malvinas.

71. **Ms. Howe-Jones** (United Kingdom), speaking in exercise of the right of reply concerning the statements

on the Falkland Islands made by Chile (on behalf of the Rio Group), Cuba and Uruguay (on behalf of MERCOSUR), said that her Government had no doubt about Britain's sovereignty over those Islands and the other British dependencies in the South Atlantic. Moreover, countries had a duty to respect the right of self-determination of the people of the Falkland Islands, who had made clear their wish to remain British. The elected representatives of the islanders had expressed their views clearly when they visited the United Nations for the debate in the Special Committee on 29 June 2001. They had asked that Committee to recognize that they, like any other democratic people, should be allowed to exercise the right of self-determination. As the democratic voice of the Falkland Islands people, they had reiterated their view that they did not want to be part of Argentina.

72. Despite its differences with Argentina on the subject of sovereignty, the United Kingdom continued to strengthen its bilateral relations and to cooperate with that country on practical arrangements on matters of common interest in the South Atlantic. It was confident that relations would continue to flourish in that spirit of cooperation and mutual interest.

Requests for hearings

73. **The Chairman** drew attention to aide-memoir 1/01 containing 11 requests for hearings relating to the questions of Gibraltar, the Western Sahara and the small Territories (agenda item 18), and agenda item 93 concerning the specialized agencies. He suggested that, in accordance with the usual practice, the communications should be circulated as Committee documents for consideration at a subsequent meeting.

74. *It was so decided.*

75. **The Chairman** suggested that, in view of the brevity of the time available and in accordance with the Committee's timetable, all new requests for hearings should be circulated as Committee documents for consideration at the next meeting.

76. *It was so decided.*

77. **The Chairman** informed the Committee that he had received a communication from the Chief Minister of Gibraltar containing a request to take the floor on the question of Gibraltar.

Organization of work

78. **The Chairman** informed the Committee that, with reference to the holding of the general debate scheduled from 10 to 16 November, it would appear that many delegations would prefer to adhere to the practice established by the General Assembly not to hold a Main Committee meeting at the same time as the general debate. He therefore suggested that the Committee should not meet during the general debate from 10 to 16 November.

79. *It was so decided.*

80. With reference to the possibility of amending the timetable for consideration of agenda item 87 concerning the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and item 88 concerning the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices, the Chairman drew the Committee's attention to paragraph 36 of resolution 51/241 and informed it that, following a discussion with the Permanent Observer for Palestine and other interested persons, it had been agreed that the Committee should maintain its programme of work regarding consideration of those two agenda items.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.



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Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 4th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 9 October 2001, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia)

Contents

Requests for hearings

Agenda item 18: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples* (*continued*)

Agenda item 91: Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations* (*continued*)

Agenda item 92: Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories* (*continued*)

Agenda item 93: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations* (*continued*)

Agenda item 12: Report of the Economic and Social Council* (*continued*)

Agenda item 94: Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories* (*continued*)

* Items which the Committee has decided to consider together.

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Requests for hearings (A/C.4/56/2 and Add.1, A/C.4/56/3 and Add.1-7 and A/C.4/56/4)

1. **The Chairman** drew the Committee's attention to the request for hearing contained in document A/C.4/56/2 relating to Gibraltar. If there were no objections, he would take it that the Committee wished to grant that request.

2. *It was so decided.*

3. **The Chairman** said that another request for hearing was contained in document A/C.4/56/2/Add.1 relating to Gibraltar. If there were no objections, he would take it that the Committee wished to grant that request.

4. *It was so decided.*

5. **The Chairman** drew the Committee's attention to the eight requests for hearings contained in documents A/C.4/56/3 and Add.1-7 relating to Western Sahara. If there were no objections, he would take it that the Committee wished to grant those requests.

6. *It was so decided.*

7. **The Chairman** drew the Committee's attention to the request for hearing contained in document A/C.4/56/4 relating to the small Territories. If there were no objections, he would take it that the Committee wished to grant that request.

8. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 18: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (*continued*) (A/56/1 and Corr.1, A/56/23 (part II), chapters VI and IX-XI, A/56/23 (part III), chapter XIII (D-F and H), A/56/159; S/2001/148, S/2001/398, S/2001/613)

Agenda item 91: Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 e of the Charter of the United Nations (*continued*) (A/56/23 (part II), chapter VIII, A/56/23 (part III), chapter XIII (A), A/56/67)

Agenda item 92: Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories (*continued*) (A/56/23 (part II), chapter V, A/56/23 (part III), chapter XIII (B))

Agenda item 93: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations (*continued*) (A/56/23 (part II), chapter VII, A/56/23 (part III), chapter XIII (C), A/56/65; A/C.4/56/CRP.1)

Agenda item 12: Report of the Economic and Social Council (*continued*) (A/56/3)

Agenda item 94: Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories (*continued*) (A/56/88)

9. **Mr. Shen Guofang** (China) said that, ever since its inception, the United Nations had had the important task of helping colonial countries and peoples to exercise their right to self-determination and to strive for independence. Gratifying results had been achieved in that regard. Of particular importance was the adoption by the General Assembly in 1960 of the historic Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, which had greatly accelerated decolonization throughout the world. The active participation in international affairs of a large number of newly independent countries had also greatly enhanced the universality of the United Nations. At the same time, as humanity was currently entering upon the new millennium, the decolonization process had still not been completed and the goals set by the Declaration remained unfulfilled. At its fifty-fifth session, the General Assembly had adopted a resolution declaring the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, thereby fully demonstrating the common aspiration of all Member States to eradicate colonialism completely.

10. It was the duty of all Member States to attach importance to the interests of the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories and to help them to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, and to realize the goal of the total eradication of colonialism throughout the world. He called on the administering Powers to

cooperate more effectively with the United Nations and the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, so as to create the conditions for the peoples of those Territories to exercise their right to self-determination.

11. His delegation hoped that the administering Powers would enter into closer cooperation with the United Nations, would fully ensure that the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories knew all their rights, and provide in a timely manner the information necessary for that purpose, and would accept United Nations visiting missions to Territories under their administration. Most of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories were small and had a very weak potential for development. His delegation therefore called upon the administering Powers to take effective measures to ensure well-balanced social, economic, cultural and educational development in those Territories while protecting natural and human resources.

12. **Mr. Baali** (Algeria) expressed his gratitude to the Chairman and the members of the Bureau of the Special Committee on Decolonization for their efforts to achieve the goals of the first International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. Despite the progress achieved during that Decade, the last bastions of colonialism in the world still remained. As a result of the close cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity, a settlement plan had been agreed upon 10 years earlier for Western Sahara, the last Non-Self-Governing Territory in Africa. The achievement of that settlement plan had been a long and difficult task, although most of the problems had been overcome in 1997 thanks to the work of Mr. James Baker, the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General.

13. Unfortunately, that process had unexpectedly become deadlocked when the appeals procedure had broken down. In response to the ambiguous position taken by the Secretariat, the Frente POLISARIO had rejected the plan proposed by it for a political solution based on so-called autonomy. At the same time, the Security Council, through its resolution 1359 (2001) of 29 June 2001, reiterated its support for the ongoing efforts by MINURSO to implement the Settlement Plan to hold a free, fair and impartial referendum for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.

14. The so-called draft framework agreement could not, under any circumstances, be considered a basis for

a just and lasting solution to the question of Western Sahara. The Settlement Plan remained the only framework that had been agreed by the two parties and enjoyed the support of the entire international community. That solution would be based on the principles of international legality and would enable the Saharan people to decide freely their future through the holding of a referendum on self-determination.

15. **Mr. Mollahosseini** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, at the beginning of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, it was important to emphasize the central political role of the United Nations in support of the decolonization process. The implementation of the Plan of Action for the Decade would enable countries to fulfil their commitments under the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and conclude the process of decolonization and the implementation of the right to self-determination of the peoples in the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. That process should continue to be based on the freely expressed wishes of the populations of the Territories concerned and in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations. The Special Committee on decolonization had played an instrumental role in bringing about the decolonization of 60 former Territories since the adoption of the Declaration in 1960. In its future activities, the Committee should be guided by the need to cooperate with the administering Powers and dispatch periodic visiting missions to the Non-Self-Governing Territories to ascertain the wishes and aspirations of the people of those Territories and transmit the corresponding information to the Organization on the basis of Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations. Together with other members of the international community, his country firmly supported the work of the United Nations in the field of decolonization and, as a member of the Special Committee, it was determined to continue to fulfil its responsibilities in that regard.

16. **Mr. Foo Shyang Piau** (Singapore), noting the important work carried out by the Committee since the adoption in 1960 of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, bringing independence to over 85 million people, said that more remained to be done to put an end to the anachronism of colonialism. Although the first International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism had made significant achievements, there

were still 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories and the United Nations should redouble its efforts to ensure that they achieved self-determination during the Second Decade, which had begun. Singapore fully appreciated the complexities faced by small Territories in making the transition to independence and, therefore, urged the United Nations to remain engaged in all phases of the decolonization process. The Special Committee, for its part, should continue the implementation of the updated plan of action as contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the Second Decade and intensify cooperation with the administering Powers.

17. The information technology revolution had opened up new possibilities in the exchange of information and experience and the formulation of corresponding strategies, including through the Internet, which contained a wealth of resources relevant to those Territories seeking self-determination. However, many Non-Self-Governing Territories lacked even the basic infrastructure required to access the Internet and reap its full benefits. Singapore was keen to share its own experiences in information technology with other developing countries in order to develop their human resources, which was vital for economic and social progress. Along with some setbacks, the process of self-determination had advanced considerably and, during the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, countries should redouble their efforts to ensure that all the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories achieved their full political, economic and social potential.

18. **Mr. Bakoniarivo** (Madagascar) expressed appreciation to the Special Committee for its report (A/56/23), which dealt with the implementation of the Committee's noble aim of eliminating colonialism. The current debate on decolonization was taking place a year after the adoption by the General Assembly of the Millennium Declaration, in which the leaders of the world's nations had reiterated their resolve to uphold the ideals of freedom and justice and to respect the right to self-determination of peoples that were still under colonial domination or foreign occupation. The United Nations should therefore, at the current session, declare that its position on the question of the decolonization of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories remained unchanged.

19. Human rights were predicated on independence, and the struggle for independence was essentially a

struggle for human rights. His delegation therefore supported the resolution adopted by the Commission on Human Rights on 6 April 2001 on the question of Western Sahara, which stressed the need for a referendum on the self-determination of the people of that Territory. In the interests of finding a just and lasting settlement of the conflict in Western Sahara, the international community and the General Assembly were in favour of the strict implementation of the settlement plan agreed to by both parties to the conflict. The General Assembly's assistance played a vital role in vouchsafing the Non-Self-Governing Territories their inalienable right to self-determination, as the successful organization of the nationwide referendum of the people of East Timor in 1999 had convincingly shown. While it welcomed the efforts made by the Special Committee during the course of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism which had ended, his delegation considered it essential that even more active and decisive measures on decolonization should be taken in the course of the Second International Decade.

20. **Mr. Ononye** (Nigeria) said that his delegation supported the principles of self-determination as enunciated in the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. It also identified with the urgent call, in General Assembly resolution 55/139 of 8 December 2000, for all States to intensify their efforts in the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Declaration and other relevant United Nations resolutions. His delegation supported the measures undertaken by the United Nations to ensure that the remaining 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories gained independence and called on the international community, especially the administering Powers, to speed up the process.

21. Efforts should be intensified to resolve the problem by organizing a referendum in all the Territories to enable the inhabitants to determine their political future. With regard to Western Sahara, the parties concerned should respect the relevant United Nations resolutions, in particular General Assembly resolution 55/141 of 8 December 2000, and ensure the early organization of a referendum. His delegation called for greater assistance to Territories in the dissemination of information on decolonization and for

the award of scholarships to citizens of those Territories to enable them to acquire education.

22. **Mr. Andjaba** (Namibia) said that his delegation attached particular importance to the situation in Western Sahara and was deeply disappointed about recent developments regarding decolonization in what was the last Non-Self-Governing Territory in Africa. His delegation had noted with deep concern the recent proposed so-called "Framework Agreement on the Status of Western Sahara", which provided no possibility for the people of Western Sahara to exercise their right of self-determination and generally deviated from the principles of the United Nations regarding decolonization. It was significant that, as recently as June 2001, the Security Council had lent no support to the proposal but had reiterated its full support for the efforts of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) to implement the settlement plan and the agreements adopted by the parties to hold a free, fair and impartial referendum for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.

23. The proposed United Nations settlement plan for Western Sahara, adopted under Security Council resolutions 658 (1990) of 27 June 1990 and 690 (1991) of 29 April 1991, remained the only framework accepted by both parties to the conflict. Its main purpose was the organization of a free and fair referendum on self-determination, free from any administrative or military constraints. Efforts should therefore continue to ensure the achievement of a just and lasting solution to the conflict in Western Sahara. His delegation objected, and would continue to object, to any attempts to abandon the settlement plan. It therefore called for a speedy resumption of efforts for its full implementation and pledged its support for the efforts of MINURSO and the Secretary-General, and of his Personal Envoy, Mr. James Baker III, to find a genuine, just and lasting solution to the question of Western Sahara.

24. **Ms. Seth** (Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that in the framework of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee, CARICOM member States — represented by Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada and Saint Lucia — continued to cooperate closely to facilitate ongoing dialogue and to introduce potential new approaches. At the regional level, CARICOM countries continued to facilitate the

participation of Caribbean Non-Self-Governing Territories in regional integration institutions, irrespective of the level of political development of those Territories. In emergency situations, CARICOM responded quickly to the needs of Non-Self-Governing Territories experiencing adverse conditions arising from natural disasters. For all the efforts of CARICOM to promote the development of neighbouring Territories, work at the international level must be accelerated. CARICOM States continued to affirm that the United Nations must invariably play a steering role in the future development process of Non-Self-Governing Territories. The successful decolonization of over 80 Territories since the Second World War testified to the success of global efforts to ensure that the peoples of those Territories attained full self-government through an internationally recognized process. In the Caribbean, such a global commitment had resulted in the achievement of either independence, as in the case of the 14 independent CARICOM States, free association, as in the case of two countries in association with the Netherlands, or integration with full political rights, as illustrated by the overseas departments of France in the Caribbean.

25. Such models of self-governance had largely proved successful, owing to the unwavering adherence to the parameters of self-determination adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 1541 (XV). There should be no faltering of international commitment to those principles. It was vital to resist the urge to legitimize the existing dependency arrangements that were unequal by any objective criteria, even if account was taken of new proposals for governance that were often applied unilaterally to many Territories, especially in the Caribbean. There was no basis for the removal of any of those Territories from the United Nations list until they had achieved full political equality.

26. CARICOM States wished to stress that the Settlement Plan for Western Sahara remained the most viable basis for determining the will of the Saharan people. Any alternative proposals must be mutually agreed by both parties.

27. In previous statements to the Committee and in plenary meetings, CARICOM had expressed its concern that major provisions of the action plan had not been implemented during the first International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. An information deficit on decolonization issues had arisen

owing to the lack of real, basic analysis available to member States of the constitutional, political and economic situation in the Territories. CARICOM reiterated its view that such analyses of the prevailing conditions in the Territories were critical to eliminating the information deficit on decolonization.

28. The information deficit on decolonization had been apparent at the recent World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. In that connection, it should be noted that although the Declaration, Programme of Action and statements delivered during the general debate had contained references to colonialism, the overwhelming emphasis had been on past colonialism. The convening of regional seminars — alternately in the Caribbean and Pacific regions — served to bridge the information gap on decolonization and provided an opportunity to assess the unique political and socio-economic development process of those Territories from a regional perspective, by hearing directly from representatives of territorial administrations, non-governmental organizations and experts. CARICOM wished to stress the need for a public education programme on political status options in the Territories and for United Nations assistance for their socio-economic development process, and the importance of participation by the Territories in any United Nations negotiations on their political future. CARICOM took note of the formation of an International Expert Group on Self-Determination in the hope that the members of the Group would contribute meaningfully in the months and years ahead.

29. **Mr. Naidu** (Fiji) said that Fiji had long been an advocate for decolonization and independence, particularly for peoples in the Pacific region, and reiterated its continuing interest in maintaining progress for the Kanak people in New Caledonia under the Matignon and Noumea Accords. A climate of peace and amicable cooperation had prevailed during that political process. However, the communiqué adopted by the heads of Government at the South Pacific Forum had expressed concern about the violence in Irian Jaya. The remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories in the list of the Committee of 24 were in the Pacific and Caribbean regions. Each of them was encountering obstacles on the path to decolonization. Individual work programmes for each Territory could provide an ideal agreed platform for the parties to work out their mutual path to complete decolonization.

30. **Mr. Da Silva** (Angola) said the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, enshrined in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, had been a landmark decision in terms of the principle of self-determination. The Declaration was the basis of the principle of decolonization, and the right to self-determination was the meeting-point of the two concepts of nationality and democracy.

31. Angola was grateful to the United Nations for the active role it was playing in the process of self-determination in East Timor, which had enabled the Timorese people to choose independence on the basis of a popular referendum, culminating in democratic elections. Angola recognized that progress had been achieved in global decolonization, but the results were still not satisfactory enough for it to consider that colonialism had been almost totally eradicated worldwide. More than a dozen Territories in the world had still not achieved independence. In the current decade it was imperative that the United Nations and the international community make greater efforts to help the countries and peoples still under colonial rule to decide freely about their political future and become part of the concert of nations.

32. As for the question of Western Sahara, Angola urged the international community to keep on supporting the United Nations Peace Plan. Angola believed that the most appropriate way to reach a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Western Sahara was to create favourable conditions for the Saharan people to exercise their right to self-determination through a popular referendum with international monitoring.

33. **Mr. dos Santos** (Mozambique) welcomed the report and the work of the Special Committee on the Situation with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. Unfortunately, the process of decolonization was not yet complete. Self-determination and independence were inalienable rights of all peoples, according to the Charter of the United Nations, General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, and other relevant norms of international law. The proclamation by the General Assembly of the period 2001-2010 as the Second International Decade for the Elimination of Colonialism was clear testimony that the international

community was aware of the need to take decisive steps to complete the process of decolonization.

34. Mozambique thanked the Secretary-General for his report on the question of Western Sahara, and commended his efforts, in close cooperation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and those of his Personal Envoy and his Special Representative, to implement the settlement plan. However, the plan, adopted more than ten years previously, had still to be fulfilled. A referendum had still to be held on self-determination for the people of Western Sahara. In spite of some successes in implementing the plan, the efforts of the international community, and the repeated appeals of the General Assembly and the Security Council, the obstacles preventing its implementation had not been overcome. The international community must focus its attention on renewing the process of implementing the plan through the holding of a free, fair and impartial referendum on self-determination for the people of Western Sahara, as the only solution agreed to by both parties and supported by the international community. He believed it was now high time to direct the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) to complete in an expedited manner the identification process which would lead to the holding of the referendum in Western Sahara, as envisaged in the Secretary-General's report to the Security Council.

35. He reiterated the appeals made to the two parties, in General Assembly resolution 55/141 of 8 December 2000, to continue their cooperation with the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy, as well as with his Special Representative, in implementing the various phases of the settlement plan and in overcoming the difficulties that remained, and to refrain from undertaking anything that would undermine the implementation of the plan and the agreements reached for its implementation.

36. **Mr. Vankham** (Lao People's Democratic Republic), after associating himself with the statement made by the representative of Malaysia on behalf of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that the 1960 Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples had greatly accelerated the decolonization process and changed the composition of the United Nations, as well as altering inter-State relations. Notwithstanding the progress achieved, however, the goal set in the first International Decade for the Eradication of

Colonialism remained unrealized. There were still 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories around the world whose future was uncertain.

37. It should be remembered, in that regard, that the ultimate goal of a world free from colonialism had been set in General Assembly resolution 46/181 of 19 December 1991. His delegation therefore urged all the parties concerned, including the United Nations, the Non-Self-Governing Territories and the administering Powers, to take appropriate measures to ensure the exercise of the right to self-determination by the peoples of those Territories, as there was no alternative to the principle of self-determination for all Non-Self-Governing Territories, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV). In that connection, the administering Powers should cooperate more closely with the United Nations and the peoples of the Territories in order to create the necessary conditions for them to exercise their right to self-determination. In conclusion, he expressed his delegation's full support for the idea of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, 2001-2010 and said that his delegation would always participate actively in United Nations work in that field and support its endeavours.

38. **Mr. Donigi** (Papua New Guinea), noting that the Special Committee had acknowledged that the Non-Self-Governing Territories were at varying stages of development, said that there could not be a "one-size-fits-all" programme of work for all the Territories. The Informal Working Group on Pacific Territories had, with the cooperation of New Zealand, made some progress with respect to the question of Tokelau. The representative of New Zealand had expressed the hope that the work programme for Tokelau could be finalized by the end of the year. His delegation looked forward to continued close cooperation with New Zealand in finalizing that work programme and to the achievement of the same degree of cooperation with the other administering Powers. It was important that the representatives of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories should participate at every stage of development of the work programmes. The question of the development of the work programmes had been discussed informally with the administering Powers. During the General Assembly debate at the preceding session all the administering Powers had welcomed that new approach. It was important to make progress,

however, to complete the work programmes and submit them to the Special Committee for endorsement.

39. Turning to the current state of global affairs, he expressed his delegation's abhorrence of the terrorist activities conducted throughout the world over the past decade, culminating in the horrendous crime against humanity perpetrated in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania. Terrorism knew no political boundaries, and its consequences were far-reaching and unpredictable, including for the economies of the small island Non-Self-Governing Territories. The Special Committee had already called on the administering Powers to continue to provide special assistance to those Territories. It had to be acknowledged that not enough was being done for their development. The administering Powers and the international aid agencies within the United Nations system should be asked to make extraordinary efforts to cater to the needs of those Territories, whose economies would steadily worsen following the recent terrorist attacks.

40. It was imperative that the administering Powers, the Secretary-General and the various organizations of the United Nations system should, in their reporting at the following session, provide information on the effects of recent terrorist acts on the economies of those Non-Self-Governing Territories and on the remedial measures taken. That information would be required in order to enable the Special Committee to make appropriate recommendations to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee and the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session.

41. **Mr. Haggag** (Egypt) said that, following the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, the United Nations had been extremely successful in promoting decolonization and the right of non-self-governing peoples to self-determination. Notwithstanding the efforts of the Special Committee, however, not all the goals set in the Declaration had been attained. The United Nations should continue its work in that area with a view to completing the process of decolonization in the course of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

42. During the Millennium Assembly, Heads of State and Government had committed themselves to intensifying efforts to achieve self-determination for colonial countries and peoples and for peoples under

foreign occupation. In order for that goal to be achieved, administering Powers must fulfil their responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations and cooperate with the Special Committee. Egypt wished to express appreciation to the administering Powers which had established relations of constructive cooperation with the Special Committee, and called on the other administering Powers to follow their example. In addition, it appealed to administering Powers to allow visiting missions to go to the Territories under their administration, so that the United Nations could obtain first-hand information on the needs and wishes of the population of those Territories. Egypt also expressed the hope that administering Powers would provide information on Non-Self-Governing Territories in accordance with Article 73 *e* of the United Nations Charter and respect the legitimate rights of the population of Non-Self-Governing Territories, including the right to dispose of their own natural resources.

43. Important events had taken place in the two years since the establishment of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET). For example, a referendum had been held, in which the population had been able freely to express their wishes, and democratic institutions had been created which would ultimately permit the formation of an independent State. Egypt supported the efforts of the international community to bolster that process. In addition, it expressed appreciation to the Government of Indonesia for its encouragement of those efforts. Without that country's courageous decision, the 1999 referendum would not have been possible. Egypt would follow closely the implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General concerning the form and structure of the international presence in that Territory after the expiration of the UNTAET mandate.

44. The United Nations must also continue to work for a settlement of the conflict in Western Sahara in accordance with the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. Egypt was closely following developments and hoped that the two parties would cooperate with the Secretary-General, his Personal Envoy and the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), so as to remove the obstacles preventing a solution of the problem.

45. **Mr. Kafando** (Burkina Faso) noted that one of the most lasting conflicts on the African continent was the one in Western Sahara, which had caused much suffering and many tragedies, divided families and created refugee flows. The international community — and primarily the United Nations, which had been trying for many years to bring the positions of the two parties closer together — must put an end to that fratricidal conflict. A solution would certainly not be easy, but each party was acting with good will and they must carefully study all avenues which could lead to the establishment of a peace process. Burkina Faso believed that the Framework Agreement on the Status of Western Sahara, proposed by Mr. James Baker III, should not be rejected outright, because it was quite promising. The granting of significant autonomy to the Saharan population could form the basis for further negotiations and did not presuppose automatic rejection of self-determination. The Secretary-General must be supported in his efforts to settle that long-standing conflict and the parties must be urged persistently to continue their dialogue and to seek a compromise, because that was the only way of achieving peace.

46. **Mr. Fall** (Senegal) emphasized that Senegal had long-standing multifaceted ties with Morocco, which had only become stronger and deeper over the centuries. In the matter of Western Sahara, it fully supported the position of Morocco, which was based on a clear understanding of the fact that a just and lasting solution of the question could be achieved only through honest and trusting negotiations. In that connection, the delegation of Senegal welcomed the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy, Mr. James Baker III, who had succeeded in displaying political pragmatism and boldness in the search for new ways out of the prevailing situation. The Framework Agreement, proposed by the Personal Envoy and supported by the Secretary-General, provided a basis for negotiations and, if adopted, could remove the obstacles in the way of implementation of the Settlement Plan. The delegation of Senegal called on the parties to continue negotiations on the basis of the draft Framework Agreement as an alternative route to a final settlement of the question of Western Sahara, to respect the ceasefire agreement and to facilitate solution of the humanitarian issues in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) without any political conditions. Senegal hoped that the parties would display political will and, in the threefold

task of achieving peace, cooperation and development, would be guided solely by the basic interests of the population of Western Sahara and of the countries of that region.

47. **Mr. Bennouna** (Morocco) reminded the Committee that his country constantly displayed a real commitment in favour of a just, lasting and final settlement, within the framework of international law, of a dispute which had been poisoning the atmosphere in the Maghreb region for more than a quarter of a century. That regional dispute had been artificially raised at a time when Morocco had been legitimately recovering its southern provinces. Since then the dispute was being artificially prolonged even though everyday life in that Territory had long been pursuing a normal course. Like all States represented in the United Nations, Morocco was defending its territorial integrity in conformity with the purposes and principles of the United Nations. Everyone was aware that Morocco was deploying all possible efforts to ensure stability and peace in the Maghreb, a peace which would enable all parties concerned to overcome their differences. That strategic choice had been strongly and repeatedly reaffirmed by His Majesty King Mohammed VI since his accession to the throne more than two years earlier. Final and lasting settlement of the dispute would pave the way for the building of a regional entity in the Maghreb that would contribute to the well-being of all the populations concerned as well as to the enhancement of relations between Africa and Europe. For that reason the international community had decided to support the framework for negotiations proposed by the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy, Mr. James A. Baker III, in annex I to the report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara of 20 June 2001 (S/2001/613).

48. According to the reasons given by the Secretary-General in that document, the draft Framework Agreement was the only way out of the situation that had been created. The inapplicability of the settlement plan, drawn up more than 10 years earlier, had been revealed year after year. In fact the plan had become a hindrance, not allowing the parties to reach agreement on a list of persons originating in the Territory who should be invited to make the choice between integration and independence. For that reason, it was necessary to search for a third alternative which fully respected the principles of international legality. That alternative could only consist of a compromise formula

allowing the creation of a local authority which would represent the population and exercise maximum powers within the framework of Moroccan sovereignty.

49. In that regard he recalled that, by its resolution 1309 (2000) of 25 July 2000, the Security Council had urged the parties to meet in direct talks under the auspices of the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy. At that meeting, which had taken place in Berlin in September 2000, Morocco had taken up the aforementioned third option based on a sincere and frank dialogue with all the other parties. Morocco's evident goodwill had been recognized by the Secretary-General in his report of 24 April 2001 (S/2001/398), in which he had stated his conviction that the Government of Morocco was prepared to offer or support some degree of devolution of authority for all the inhabitants and former inhabitants of the Territory which would be genuine, substantial and in keeping with international norms. With that conviction Mr. Baker had elaborated a draft Framework Agreement on the Status of Western Sahara which translated the concept of a transfer of authority into a legal document. In May 2001 the Personal Envoy had visited Algeria, where he had submitted that document for the consideration of the Algerian authorities and the Frente POLISARIO. In its memorandum addressed to Mr. Baker on that question, Algeria, even if it did not approve the document, had wished the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy success in his efforts to seek an alternative solution, thereby acknowledging the possibility of an alternative.

50. The draft Framework Agreement clearly underlined the fact that, once agreed upon by the parties, the decision on status would be submitted to the population for approval through a referendum within five years following its adoption. Thus all the requirements had been assembled enabling the Security Council, acting under Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations on the peaceful settlement of disputes, to recommend the most suitable procedure for reaching a just, lasting and final solution. In that regard the Security Council had unanimously adopted its very important resolution 1359 (2001) of 29 June 2001, which marked a watershed in the international community's treatment of the so-called question of Western Sahara and the dispute resulting therefrom.

51. Morocco had immediately declared its acceptance of the draft Framework Agreement as a basis for negotiations and its readiness to participate fully in those negotiations with the aim of reaching a just and

lasting settlement of the dispute as soon as possible with the other parties over Western Sahara. With that commitment on the part of Morocco in mind, Mr. Baker had convened a meeting in Pinedale in the state of Wyoming, United States of America, from 27 to 29 August, with the participation of representatives of the Frente POLISARIO and of the Governments of Algeria and Mauritania, during which the Frente POLISARIO and the Government of Algeria had discussed the provisions of the draft Framework Agreement and had promised to provide further clarifications at a future meeting. The representative of Mauritania had underlined his support for any solution likely to promote peace and stability in the region and which enjoyed the approval of the parties.

52. Morocco hoped that Algeria and the Frente POLISARIO would fulfil their promise as soon as possible and clarify their respective positions regarding the draft Framework Agreement. Only by doing so would they be able to fulfil their obligations towards the international community. As for the 1,479 members of the Armed Forces of Morocco still detained in camps, they should be freed without delay in accordance with the norms of humanitarian law and in response to the urgent appeals of the United Nations Secretary-General and Security Council.

53. **Mr. Baali** (Algeria), referring to the statement made by the representative of Morocco, said that after the Wyoming meeting the representative of the Secretary-General had issued a communiqué referring to both a Settlement Plan and a Framework Agreement. Algeria had again stated its objections regarding the Framework Agreement, and the Frente POLISARIO had totally rejected it. The Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General had proposed that Algeria should clarify its position in writing, and it intended to submit the appropriate document soon, setting out its objections. Referring to the statements made by the representatives of Burkina Faso and Senegal, he said that there were no grounds in the context of the Framework Agreement for drawing the Committee's attention to Security Council resolutions on Western Sahara, since they did not in any way demonstrate the Council's support for the Framework Agreement.

54. **Mr. Bennouna** (Morocco) said that, at the recent seminar in Barcelona, academic circles had shown a keen interest in the Framework Agreement. He recalled that the Security Council had supported the idea of holding negotiations on the basis both of the

Framework Agreement and of any other proposal, and any amendments to the Agreement could be sent to Mr. Baker. If Algeria was not satisfied with particular aspects of the Agreement it could submit for consideration any alternatives it preferred. The Framework Agreement was intended to give a new impetus to the discussions and negotiations aimed at achieving a political solution.

55. **Mr. Simamora** (Indonesia), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the references made by the representative of Fiji to events in Irian Jaya amounted to a violation of the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of Member States. The matter was an internal affair of Indonesia and had nothing to do with the Committee's agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.